

159. *ÆGIALITES MINOR* (Meyer). Little Ringed Plover.
Abundant throughout Egypt and Nubia.

160. *ÆGIALITES PECUARIUS* (Temm.).

In 1868 I met with this species in great abundance, especially at Golosaneh and Girgeh. On my second visit, although always on the look-out for it, I only shot one at Golosaneh, on the 8th of May. I generally met with it in similar localities to those frequented by *Æ. cantianus* and *Æ. minor*. On the wing it is often hard to distinguish from the latter.

Temminck has probably figured this bird under the name *C. pecuarius*, Pl. Col. 183, from a specimen which he mentions as having been procured at the Cape of Good Hope; but the figure is by no means good.

[To be continued.]

XI.—*Additional Notes on Birds of the Territory of the Trans-Vaal Republic.* By THOMAS AYRES. (Communicated by JOHN HENRY GURNEY.)

[THE following notes by Mr. Ayres refer to various species of birds observed by him in the Trans-Vaal territory, which were not included in his first list, published in 'The Ibis' for 1869, p. 286, and which, except where the contrary is mentioned, have been identified by the examination of specimens sent by Mr. Ayres to this country.]

At the end of this series of notes, some additional remarks are added relating to a few of the species included in Mr. Ayres's previous paper.

Those of the species referred to by Mr. Ayres which are included by Mr. Layard in his work on the Birds of South Africa are distinguished by the addition of the number appended to them in Mr. Layard's book, preceded by the letter L.—J. H. G.]

67. *CIRCUS ÆRUGINOSUS* (Linn.). Marsh Harrier.

The present bird (a male) was shot by myself in December, 1869, whilst it was hunting in a marsh after the manner of *C. ranivorus*; its flight was slow and heavy. I have never seen

one before or since, so that it must be decidedly scarce in the neighbourhood of Potchefstroom.

[This is the only specimen of *C. æruginosus* which I have seen from any locality south of the equator; the specimen sent appears to be a bird of the year.—J. H. G.]

68. (L. 51.) *CIRCUS RANIVORUS* (Daud.). Le Vaillant's Harrier.

The nestling sent was brought to me in January and was stated to have been taken in the swamp near Potchefstroom.

[See also 'The Ibis' for 1868, p. 464, J. H. G.]

69. (L. 49.) *CIRCUS SWAINSONI*, Smith. Swainson's Harrier.
Female.—Total length $19\frac{1}{2}$ inches, bill $1\frac{5}{16}$, tarsus $3\frac{1}{4}$, wing $13\frac{3}{4}$, tail $9\frac{1}{4}$.

Iris dark hazel, tarsi and feet yellow, cere greenish yellow, bill horny-black, gape dull green.

This specimen was shot by my brother in February. These Harriers are only here during the summer months, and then not plentifully; they skim quietly about amongst the trees and houses of Potchefstroom, and catch up any unwary chicken or bird that falls in their way. In the same quiet, noiseless way they frequent the reedy streams of the country.

70. (L. 64.) *PHASMOPTYNX CAPENSIS* (Smith). African Short-eared Owl.

This Owl occurs in the swamps near Potchefstroom, where I have occasionally come across its nest, whilst beating for Snipes amongst the long grass and rushes. The nest is merely a small cavity in the ground, snugly situated under a clump of grass or rushes, and with a few blades of dry rushes at the bottom.

The bird flies from its nest in a great hurry at the near approach of danger. The eggs are two or three in number, pure white and slightly glossy, size about $1\frac{5}{8}$ – $1\frac{3}{8}$ inches.

I found a male bird sitting upon a nest, which contained three eggs a good deal incubated; this was in the month of April.

71. (L. 57.) *HUHUA VERREAUXI* (Bon.). Verreaux's Owl.
Female.—Length 26 inches; bill pale-ash colour.

I found this fine Owl sparsely scattered along the banks of

the Limpopo during a recent journey through that district. About sunrise individuals may be heard making a low hooting "goo, goo," repeated at intervals.

The stomach of the specimen sent contained the remains of a Guinea-fowl (*Numida coronata*, Gray), a species which is exceedingly plentiful all along the Limpopo, and roosts at night on the trees by the side of the river.

72. (L. 61.) SCOPS LEUCOTIS (Temm.). White-faced Scops Owl.

I met with only one of these Owls during my trip to the Limpopo, which was brought to me by a Caffre in a starving state; it was a female, and measured in entire length $10\frac{1}{4}$ inches, the wing $7\frac{1}{2}$, tail 4, and tarsus $1\frac{3}{4}$. Another specimen was shot by my brother in the month of August, amongst some willows at Pochtefstroom.

73. (L. 56.) ATHENE PERLATA (Vieill.). Pearl-spotted Owlet.

Male.—Length $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches, wing 4, tail $2\frac{3}{4}$, tarsus $1\frac{1}{16}$; iris yellow.

This little Owl is tolerably common along most of the rivers in the Bush, and especially on the banks of the Lipopo; it often occurs in pairs; it is partly diurnal, and whistles loudly, more frequently by day or on moonlight nights; when the Jackals begin to cry, it almost invariably utters its short song, which somewhat resembles that of the Golden Cuckoo, *Chrysococcyx auratus* (Gmel.). Its notes run thus, or nearly so, do, re, mi, fa, sol, sol, sol, sol.

The grasp of this Owl is extremely powerful, considering its small size. One that I wounded made its claws meet through the tip of my finger. In most of the specimens sent I found the remains of mice.

[I cannot find any sufficient ground of specific distinction between southern specimens of this Owl, to which Lichtenstein assigned the name of "*licua*," and more northern examples, on which Vieillot founded his "*Strix perlata*." See also Dr. O. Finsch's recent remarks on this point in the *Trans. of the Zool. Soc.* vol. vii. p. 209.—J. H. G.]

74. (L. 66.) *SCELOSTRIX CAPENSIS* (Smith). South-African Grass Owl.

These Owls inhabit the long rushes in the swamps surrounding Potchefstroom, but are not plentiful; their flight is noiseless.

75. (L. 115.) *MELITTOPHAGUS PUSILLUS* (Müll.). Rufous-winged Bee-eater.

This species is pretty common along the Limpopo, generally in pairs, but sometimes in small companies.

76. (L. 116.) *MELITTOPHAGUS BULLOCKOIDES* (Smith). White-fronted Bee-eater.

These Bee-eaters I have found in flights on the banks of rivers, generally alighting on the tops of bushes and trees, or on any bare exposed twig; their notes are harsh and short.

77. (126.) *CINNYRIS BIFASCIATA* (Shaw). Bifasciated Sun-bird.

Total length $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches, bill 1, tarsus $\frac{13}{8}$, wing $2\frac{3}{4}$, tail 2.

This lovely little bird I first shot at some distance from the river Limpopo, during the month of July. I found several feeding amongst some Aloes, but they were very shy and difficult to obtain. Flowers being at that season exceedingly scarce, they frequently hunted for small insects amongst the dry seed-tops of the high grass, hovering round the stem as a Humming-bird would do, and thus remaining stationary, but darting away immediately on my approach, so that I found it difficult to get within forty or fifty yards of them.

78. (L. 127.) *NECTARINIA FAMOSA* (Linn.). Malachite Sun-bird.

These Sun-birds are exceedingly scarce about Potchefstroom; but a few of them frequent the neighbouring hills and open country.

79. (L. 154.) *DRYMÆCA AFFINIS*, Smith. Allied *Drymæca*.

This species frequents weeds, high grass, and low bush, and is generally distributed over the country.

80. (L. 158.) *DRYMÆCA CHINIANA*, Smith. Kurichane *Drymæca*.

Total length 6 inches ; iris light brown.

This species is common in many localities on the Limpopo.

[Mr. Ayres, in addition to the normal specimens of this *Drymæca* which he collected, forwarded an example of a pale variety, respecting which he says :—"The only one I have seen ; it flew actively from tree to tree, and I had some difficulty in getting a shot at it ; the stomach contained small insects."—J. H. G.]

81. (L. 150.) *DRYMÆCA OCULARIA*, Smith. Rufous-cheeked *Drymæca*.

Male.—Total length $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches, bill $\frac{1\frac{7}{8}}{2}$, wing $1\frac{7}{8}$, tail $2\frac{7}{8}$; iris hazel, bill black, tarsi and feet dusky pale.

Female.—Total length $5\frac{3}{8}$, tarsus $\frac{1\frac{3}{8}}{8}$, tail $2\frac{5}{8}$, bill and wings as in male.

There is very little difference in plumage between the sexes ; but the rufous patch on the cheeks is much lighter in the female than in the male.

I first met with this species amongst the low bushes on the banks of the Vaal River, and between that and the Hartz River, where they were pretty plentiful, hopping briskly about amongst the thickets, with the active habits common to most birds of this genus.

82. (L. 156.) *DRYMÆCA RUFICAPILLA*, Smith. Rufous-headed *Drymæca*.

Total length $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches ; tarsi and feet pale ; iris light brown.

The heel in this bird bends curiously forward with the front toe, as if out of joint, or double-jointed.

This species inhabits low scrub.

83. (L. 159.) *CISTICOLA TERRESTRIS* (Smith). Ground *Cisticola*.

Total length $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches ; iris light brown.

These little birds live amongst the long grass, and appear to move most in the evening, about sunset, lying quiet in the heat of the day ; they are generally to be seen three or four together.

[This species is a typical *Cisticola*, the tail consisting of twelve rectrices ; and it seems very closely allied to *Cisticola cursitans*

of Asia, and *C. schænicola* of Southern Europe and Northern Africa, as well as to *C. ayresi* of Natal, if, indeed, these be all really distinct species, on which subject the article of Drs. Finsch and Hartlaub in their work on the Birds of East Africa, under the head of *Cisticola cursitans*, p. 229, may be advantageously consulted. The following measurements of *Cisticolæ*, giving the length of the tarsus and of the wing from the carpal joint to the tip, will show how slight is the variation in size between these closely allied races.

		Wing. inches.	Tarsus. inch.
<i>Cisticola terrestris</i> ,	Damara Land . . .	2	$\frac{14}{16}$
„ „	Trans-Vaal . . .	$1\frac{13}{16}$	$\frac{13}{16}$
„ <i>cursitans</i> ,	India . . .	2	$\frac{13}{16}$
„ „	Syria . . .	$2\frac{1}{16}$	$\frac{13}{16}$
„ „	Constantinople . .	$2\frac{1}{16}$	$\frac{13}{16}$
„ <i>schænicola</i> ,	Italy . . .	$1\frac{13}{16}$	$\frac{12}{16}$
„ „	Egypt . . .	$1\frac{13}{16}$	$\frac{11}{16}$
„ <i>ayresi</i> ,	Natal . . .	$1\frac{12}{16}$	$\frac{11}{16}$

J. H. G.]

84. (L. 148.) *AEDON FASCIOLATA* (Smith). Fasciolated Aedon.

Total length $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches in the male, $4\frac{3}{4}$ in the female; iris dark.

These birds feed upon small insects. They inhabit low bush and scrub; when disturbed they invariably fly and settle close to or on the stems of the bushes, and then work their way up. They appear to be solitary in their habits. In the living bird the speckled wings are more conspicuous than the barred breast.

[Sir A. Smith, who first described and figured this species and its near congener, *A. subcinnamomea*, in his 'Illustrations of the Zoology of South Africa' (*Aves*, pl. 111), refers both to the genus *Drymæca*, but says of the latter that "it is to be viewed as an aberrant form" of that genus. I am much disposed to think that these two species should be formed into a separate genus by themselves; but as the multiplication of genera ought, where possible, to be avoided, I refer them to the genus *Aedon*,

to which, as it seems to me, they are more nearly allied than to *Drymæca*.—J. H. G.]

85. (L. 182.) *AEDON LEUCOPHRYS* (Vieill.). White-browed Aedon.

Total length $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches; tarsi and feet pale, iris dusky.

These birds inhabit the bush, but appear to be rather scarce. Their food consists of insects; and I noticed one feeding on the ground. In habits they appear much to resemble the Warblers.

86. (L. 181.) *AEDON PÆNA* (Smith). Smith's Aedon.

Total length $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches; iris dusky, bill black.

These also are by no means plentiful; and the two I obtained were very shy and difficult to approach. Their stomachs contained insects. This species is found amongst thorn-trees, and high grass, and when in motion constantly jerks the tail, showing to advantage the broad white tips of the feathers.

87. (L. 171.) *EREMOMELA FLAVIVENTRIS* (Burch.). Yellow-bellied Bush-chirper.

Female.—Total length 4 inches, bill $\frac{7}{16}$, tarsus $\frac{1}{16}$, wing $2\frac{2}{16}$, tail $1\frac{1}{2}$.

In appearance and habits this species resembles *Zosterops virens*.

88. *EREMOMELA USTICOLLIS*, Sundev. Brown-throated Bush-chirper.

Male, total length $4\frac{3}{8}$ inches, bill $\frac{9}{16}$, tarsus $\frac{1}{16}$, wing $2\frac{4}{16}$, tail $1\frac{2}{16}$; female slightly smaller; iris light tawny in male, nearly white in female; tarsi yellow.

This species also much resembles a *Zosterops* in its habits. It sings sweetly, but not loudly; and when in a tree only a few feet overhead, its voice sounds as though it came from a distance. Its food consists of insects, for which it may generally be found searching actively amongst the upper branches and leaves of trees and bushes.

89. (L. 187.) *BRADYPTERUS SYLVATICUS*, Sundev. Pavanur Reed-Warbler.

This species is common amongst the high grass and rushes of the swamps of the Trans-Vaal.

[I agree with the view expressed by Mr. Layard (Ibis, 1869, p. 366) to the effect that this species is probably identical with "Le Pavaneur" of Le Vaillant.—J. H. G.]*

90. (L. 210.) *PARUS CINERASCENS*, Vieill. Grisette Tit.

Male.—Total length $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches; iris dark hazel, bill black, tarsi and feet dark ash-colour.

These birds are sparsely scattered along the rivers, frequenting scrub and low bush, feeding upon insects, and creeping about the roots and low branches in search of their food; their flight is not prolonged, and their notes are harsh.

91. (L. 212.) *PAROIDES CAPENSIS* (Gmel.). Cape Becque-fleur.

Total length $3\frac{5}{8}$ inches; bill black.

I shot this bird on the borders of the Limpopo, amongst the bush. Its stomach contained insects; its habits resemble those of the smaller Warblers.

92. (L. 213.) *PARISOMA SUBCÆRULEUM* (Vieill.). Rufous-vented Grignet.

Male.—Total length 6 inches; iris light tawny; bill, tarsi, and feet black.

I first found this bird in the Mariqua district, and afterwards along the Limpopo; it creeps about the low bushes, and amongst the grass at the roots of trees, in search of insects.

93. *BUDYTES FLAVA* (Linn.). Grey-headed Yellow Wagtail.

Total length $7\frac{1}{16}$ inches; iris, bill, tarsi and feet dusky.

This Wagtail appears here in our spring in considerable numbers, and leaves again about the latter end of April; they do not appear to nest here, neither are they in good plumage; the best-plumaged birds are to be got just as they are leaving. During their stay here they are common on our market-square early every morning, where they find abundant food amongst the short grass, and the cow-dung, which attracts many insects, on which they are often to be seen feeding in company with *Motacilla capensis*.

* [Cf. Sharpe, Cat. Afr. Birds, p. 33, where *B. sylvaticus* is treated as a synonym of *B. brachypterus* (*Calamodyta brachyptera*, Vieill.).—ED.]

[Out of seven specimens sent by Mr. Ayres, only one showed the fully developed bluish-grey cap peculiar to the male in breeding-plumage.—J. H. G.]

94. BUDYTES MELANOCEPHALA (Licht.). Black-headed Yellow Wagtail.

[A male with a fully developed black head was sent by Mr. Ayres with the seven specimens of *B. flava*. In common with many other naturalists, he does not appear to consider this form specifically distinct.—J. H. G.]

95. (L. 221.) MOTACILLA AGUIMP, Temm. Widow Wagtail.

This Wagtail is not nearly so plentiful as *M. capensis*; it is almost always found in pairs, usually near rivers, and often where cattle have been lying during the night, where it catches the insects that are attracted by the cow-dung.

It is generally distributed, but rather more plentifully along the Vaal River than elsewhere.

96. (L. 192.) SAXICOLA INFUSCATA, Smith. Fuscous Wheatear.

Total length $7\frac{7}{8}$ inches, bill 1, tarsus $1\frac{1}{4}$, wings $4\frac{1}{4}$, tail $4\frac{1}{4}$; iris dusky; bill, tarsi and feet black.

I saw two specimens near the Vaal River, one of which I killed; its stomach contained a single Locust, which it had swallowed nearly whole; it had all the appearance of a Flycatcher, as it sat upon the upper twigs of a low bush, and somewhat of the Flycatcher's wavering flight when it left the bush and settled on the ground close by, apparently in search of some insect.

97. (L. 200.) SAXICOLA SINUATA, Sundev. Sundevall's Wheatear.

Female.—Iris dusky; bill, tarsi, and feet black.

I shot this Chat on the open plains, some thirty miles from Potchefstroom. It was on stony ground; and I put it up twice or thrice, when it invariably settled on some small stone. The stomach contained insects.

98. (L. 249.) *BESSONORNIS HUMERALIS* (Smith). White-shouldered Chat-Thrush.

Male.—Iris dusky; bill black.

I shot this scarce bird amongst the thick scrub on the banks of the Limpopo; the stomach contained insects; it was lively and restless in its actions.

99. (L. 230.) *ANTHUS CAFFER*, Sundev. Caffer Pipit.

This Pipit places its nest on the ground in some snug well-sheltered nook, or at the foot of a tuft of grass. It is cup-shaped and neatly built of dry grass, the outer layers coarse, the next fine, and lined with hair from the tails of cattle. The eggs are four in number.

100. (L. 228.) *ANTHUS PYRRHONOTUS*, Vieill. Cinnamon Pipit.

Male.—Total length 8 inches; iris dusky, tarsi and feet dusky pale.

This Pipit is distributed during the winter months over the whole country, but more plentifully on high bare lands than in the bush or along the Limpopo. It feeds on insects, has a low dipping flight, and occasionally alights on low trees.

[I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. E. L. Layard for pointing out to me the oldest of the many specific names which have been applied to this Pipit; this name was founded on Le Vaillant's plate, No. 197, which I agree with Mr. Layard in referring to this species. The remainder of the synonymy of this Pipit has been recently published in detail by Mr. R. B. Sharpe, in the very useful Catalogue of the African birds now in his collection, No. 693.—J. H. G.]

101. (L. 229.) *ANTHUS RAALTENII*, Temm. Raalten's Pipit.

This species resembles the preceding in its low dipping flight.

102. (L. 204.) *BRADORNIS MARIQUENSIS*, Smith. Mariqua Flycatcher.

I noticed two of these Flycatchers on my journey to the Limpopo, and two others near the junction of that river with the

Mariqua; they appeared to have much the habits of the common English Flycatcher.

103. (L. 312.) *NILAUS BRUBRU* (Lath.). Brubru Shrike.

This species is tolerably common on the Limpopo.

104. (L. 252.) *CRATEROPUS BICOLOR*, Jardine. Southern Black and White Babbler.

I obtained this species near the river Limpopo.

105. (L. 347.) *BUPHAGA AFRICANA*, Linn. Greater Ox-pecker.

Is not this bird rightly named *Buphaga*? During our stay in the bush Ox-peckers appeared in numbers about our oxen, and actually ate large holes in the fleshy part of their backs, often one or two inches deep, and two or three inches in diameter, thus creating bad sores. They do this little by little, and day by day; and though it is annoying to the ox, I cannot say that it seems to feel it much. The birds attack just that part of the back where the ox cannot swish them off with its tail or dislodge them with its horns. They especially infest those oxen which have lost their tails by inoculation for the lung-disease. I had previously thought that these birds only ate the parasitical insects common to cattle and game.

This species is not found about Potchefstroom, but is exceedingly common from the Mariqua all along the Limpopo; it is a pest to the hunter, of whose approach it warns the Buffalo and Rhinoceros by its loud harsh note, which is perfectly understood by its huge friends.

I have not seen any holes picked by these birds in the Buffalo or other game, but only in cattle.

106. (L. 331.) *CORVUS SCAPULATUS*, Daud. Scapulary Crow.

This is a scarce bird here. Its eggs are pale green with small dusky spots; those sent were taken from a nest placed in a thorn-tree in a range of hills about twenty miles from Potchefstroom.

[To be continued.]